



COTTON
AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

ADVANCING AUSTRALIAN COTTON





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CHAIR'S REPORT

LIZ STOTT

This year marked an important leadership transition for Cotton Australia as I stepped into the role of Chair following several years as Deputy Chair. I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of outgoing Chair, Nigel Burnett, whose leadership and commitment over many years helped strengthen both the organisation and the broader industry. I would also like to welcome new Board members, Tony Geitz and Gavin Dal Broi, who bring valuable experience and perspectives to the Board table.

A key focus for the Board this year has been ensuring Cotton Australia remains well positioned for the future. The organisation has continued to perform strongly across advocacy, grower engagement, industry leadership and financial management, while remaining focused on practical outcomes for growers. The Board also continues to place significant importance on good governance, strong financial oversight and ensuring grower levy investments are used responsibly and effectively.

Importantly, this year Cotton Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) endorsed progression of the industry's strategic roadmap work, which will help guide the future of Australian cotton. This includes progressing the reshaping of the *myBMP* program and advancing traceability initiatives to ensure Australian cotton continues to

The past year has reinforced the importance of strong leadership, clear industry direction and ensuring growers continue to have a strong and united voice representing their interests.

The 2025-26 cotton season has presented significant challenges for growers, including reduced water availability driven by increasingly dry seasonal conditions, rising input costs, and supply disruptions for key inputs such as fertiliser and diesel resulting from global geopolitical instability. Cotton Australia has been active on all these fronts, working to ensure grower voices are

represented at the decision-making tables that matter.

As Chair of Cotton Australia, I remain deeply committed to ensuring the organisation continues to advocate responsibly and effectively on behalf of levy-paying growers, while maintaining a clear focus on the long-term sustainability and success of the Australian cotton industry. As a grower myself, I understand the challenges and pressures farming businesses continue to face in an increasingly complex operating environment, and the importance of ensuring Cotton Australia remains practical, disciplined and focused on delivering value back to growers and regional communities.

meet evolving customer, market and community expectations, while remaining practical and valuable for growers. The strong grower feedback received throughout this process has reinforced the importance of ensuring these systems support productive farming businesses and maintain the competitiveness and credibility of Australian cotton into the future.

The Board also recognises that maintaining a strong and effective industry organisation requires ongoing financial sustainability. The Cotton Australia levy has not increased for more than a decade and, in fact, was reduced from \$2 per bale to the current \$1.50 per bale approximately 13 years ago. During that time, Cotton Australia has continued expanding its advocacy and industry responsibilities while managing the significant increase in operating costs experienced across the industry and broader economy in recent years.

As part of our responsibility to ensure the organisation remains financially sustainable and continues delivering strong outcomes for growers into the future, the Board is considering a modest levy increase aligned with CPI. Any proposal would be carefully considered and communicated with growers, with the objective of ensuring Cotton Australia remains appropriately resourced to continue representing and supporting the industry effectively in the years ahead.

As we look forward, grower input will remain critical in shaping the future priorities of both Cotton Australia and the broader industry. One of the highlights for myself and fellow Directors over the past 12 months has been the opportunity to engage directly with growers during our regional Board visits, at industry events such as the Grower of the Year Field Day, and through our general meetings in Sydney. The insights gained and relationships built through these conversations are invaluable to the work we do as a Board and help ensure we remain connected to the priorities and challenges facing growers across the industry. I am also looking forward to continuing these conversations and further strengthening those connections with growers and industry stakeholders at the Cotton Conference in August.

I am deeply grateful to our levy-paying growers for their ongoing trust and engagement, and to my fellow Directors, Cotton Australia staff, Cotton Grower Associations and industry partners for their dedication throughout the year. Representing your interests is a privilege, and together we remain focused on *advancing Australian cotton*.



LIZ STOTT
CHAIR, COTTON AUSTRALIA



Sadly, this year was also marked by the passing of our fellow Director, Bruce Connolly, following a tragic accident earlier in the year. Bruce was a highly respected industry leader, a passionate advocate for northern Australian agriculture and a valued member of the Cotton Australia Board. He played a significant role in helping establish cotton as a viable industry in the Northern Territory and was deeply committed to supporting growers and regional communities. Bruce brought practical knowledge, thoughtful leadership and genuine passion to every discussion, and he will be greatly missed by everyone across the cotton industry. On behalf of the Board and Cotton Australia, I extend our sincere condolences to Bruce's wife, Tanya, and his sons, Darcy, Jack and Gus, along with his family, friends and colleagues.



CEO'S REPORT

ADAM KAY

One of the strongest themes throughout the year has been the growing importance of trust and transparency. Customers, governments and investors increasingly need to understand where products come from and how they are produced. Australian cotton has a strong story to tell, and the work across our communications, sustainability and Cotton to Market programs is helping ensure that story is being heard in a clear and consistent way.

The release of the industry's latest sustainability report and the continued development of industry-wide indicators are important steps in this work. As global sustainability reporting frameworks evolve, it is important that Australian cotton remains credible and aligned with customer expectations, while also ensuring reporting remains practical and useful for growers.

The *myBMP* program continues to underpin market access and industry credibility. While sustainability premiums across global markets remain variable, there is still strong interest in accredited Australian cotton and ongoing recognition of the standards growers are achieving on farm. Our Regional Managers and *myBMP* team continue to play an important role supporting growers through accreditation and connecting them with Cotton Australia's broader work.

Our Cotton to Market team has also continued to strengthen relationships

This year highlighted just how quickly the operating environment for agriculture can change. From sustainability expectations and global supply chain pressures through to water policy, workforce challenges and fuel and fertiliser insecurity, our cotton growers are navigating a more complex business landscape than ever before.

Against this backdrop, Cotton Australia has remained focused on practical outcomes for growers while continuing to position Australian cotton as a trusted, high-quality and responsibly produced natural fibre.

Advocacy remained a major focus throughout the year as Cotton Australia continued engaging with governments and policymakers on issues including water, biosecurity, energy, workforce and environmental regulation. Building long-term relationships with decision-makers across all political parties at both state and federal levels remains essential as the industry continues to evolve and expand.

Water policy continues to be one of the most important issues facing growers and regional communities. Cotton Australia's position remains clear: there is no need for further water acquisition. Instead, the focus should be on more holistic river and environmental management approaches that deliver measurable environmental outcomes.

with brands and retailers in Australia and overseas. Demand for traceable and responsibly produced natural fibres is increasing, and Australian cotton continues to be recognised for the integrity behind its production systems. This year also marked an important milestone for Australian agriculture, with the sector surpassing the \$100 billion gross production target ahead of schedule. Cotton contributes around three per cent of this value, with production in the 25-26 season having an estimated value of \$3.4 billion.

Education and leadership development continue to deliver long-term benefits for the industry. Through teacher engagement programs, scholarships, leadership courses and industry training opportunities, we are helping strengthen understanding of agriculture while investing in the next generation of industry leaders. This year saw record demand for the Future Cotton Leaders program, resulting in its largest cohort to date.

Community engagement also remained an important part of our work. From regional events through to the Brisbane EKKA, the Sydney Royal Easter Show and the Australian Cotton Forum, all these interactions continue to show the strong public interest in farming and the genuine support for Australian growers when people can engage directly with the industry.

A critical piece of forward-looking work has been the industry Roadmap. Cotton Australia and



Adam Kay and Robyn Lehmann (Regional Manager, Emerald)



Adam with participants at the Northern Cotton Growers Association and Cotton Grower Services field day

the CRDC consulted widely on the initial findings, with further research then commissioned based on the grower feedback. We look forward to progressing this work with CRDC and ACSA to set up the industry for a positive future.

As we continue implementing our strategic plan, I would like to thank the Cotton Australia team, our industry partners, Board members and, most importantly, our levy-paying growers for their ongoing support

and contribution. The toughness, innovation and professionalism across the industry continue to strengthen the reputation of Australian cotton both here and overseas.

Adam Kay

ADAM KAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
COTTON AUSTRALIA



ABOUT COTTON AUSTRALIA

Cotton Australia is the peak body representing Australia's cotton growers, supporting up to 1,500 cotton farming families across New South Wales and Queensland, with a growing number of growers in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Cotton Australia supports the Australian cotton industry to be world-competitive, sustainable and valued by the community. Its role spans setting strategic direction, advocating on behalf of growers, supporting research and development, promoting the industry's strengths and reporting on environmental performance. This reflects increasing expectations on agriculture to demonstrate transparency, accountability and ongoing improvement.

In 2025-26, Cotton Australia operated in an environment shaped by input costs, uncertainty and changing policy settings. At the same time, demand for sustainable Australian cotton backed by supply chain transparency continued to grow. The organisation has focused on ensuring growers are well represented and equipped to respond to market and regulatory requirements.

The Strategic Plan 2023-2028 guides this work, with a clear direction to ensure Australian cotton remains trusted, competitive and in demand. The plan focuses on five priority areas, each supported by actions and measurable targets:

- Advocacy
- Trust
- Sustainability
- Leadership
- Governance

Policy and advocacy remain central to Cotton Australia's work. Engaging with growers, listening to their concerns and identifying emerging issues. These insights are developed into policy positions and taken to government and industry, ensuring advocacy reflects the priorities of cotton-growing businesses.

Supporting growers at a local level is another key focus. With regional managers based across cotton regions to provide on-the-ground support, Cotton Australia can support growers with their day-to-day operations.

Cotton Australia also leads the industry's Best Management Practice program, *myBMP*, a voluntary framework that ensures *myBMP*-

accredited farms produce the world's best cotton using responsible and efficient management practices.

A strong connection to research and development remains a priority. Cotton Australia provides a conduit for growers to feed into the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) to help guide investment in research funded through the cotton R&D levy and matched by the Australian Government.

Cotton Australia works with Cotton Grower Associations (CGAs), industry organisations and research partners to coordinate effort and maximise impact, including implementing the sustainability framework PLANET. PEOPLE. Paddock. and contributing to the Cotton Industry Strategic Roadmap. Cotton Australia also partners with CRDC and Cotton Seed Distributors (CSD) to deliver CottonInfo – the Australian cotton industry's extension program, connecting growers with research.

Cotton Australia exists to deliver value to its growers, focusing on practical outcomes that support a resilient, productive and sustainable cotton industry.



ADVOCACY



TRUST



SUSTAINABILITY



LEADERSHIP



GOVERNANCE

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue Cotton Australia cap and a blue button-down shirt, is smiling and working in a cotton field. She is surrounded by cotton plants with white bolls. The background is a clear blue sky with some white geometric line patterns in the upper right corner.

THANKS TO OUR LEVY PAYERS

Cotton Australia thanks all growers who contributed the full Cotton Australia levy for the 2025-26 year. Your contribution is acknowledged, respected and used efficiently under the direction of the Board and senior management of Cotton Australia, ensuring strong outcomes for growers across all areas of focus.

We will continue working in the best interests of growers and the wider cotton supply chain, supporting the long-term success of the Australian cotton industry.

WATER REPORT



NSW Shadow Minister for Water, Steph Cooke visits Bidgee Cropping

During 2025-26, much of our engagement has been focused on the key threats that are contained in the ongoing NSW Government Connectivity Review, and in preparation for the major Murray-Darling Basin Plan Review and the associated Federal Water Act Review which will occur throughout 2026 and into 2027.

On the physical water availability front, the year reflected a tightening water supply. Early in the period, widespread rainfall across parts of the Northern Basin improved on-farm storages and provided limited harvesting opportunities, and some substantial inflows into headwater storages in northern NSW.

However, from the Macquarie Valley south, inflows were far more limited, and drought conditions intensified in the Murrumbidgee and Murray valleys, reducing plantings, and confidence in the 2026/27 year.

At the national level, a federal election and subsequent ministerial reshuffle temporarily slowed policy activity but also reinforced the importance of early engagement with new decision-makers. Following the appointment of Senator Murray Watt as Minister for Environment and Water, Cotton Australia wrote promptly to seek early discussions and to reiterate our priorities: maintain the integrity of water entitlements, ensure water recovery programs are transparent and efficient, and avoid further policy-

driven reductions to reliability without robust evidence and consultation.

The value of united advocacy has been shown in the improvements that were made by the Federal Government to the new draft National Water Agreement. While at time of writing (April 2026), only the Federal Government had signed this new agreement, and the final content has not been seen by irrigation advocacy groups, there is no doubt that the publicly available draft is a far better document than the version first circulated by the Federal Government.

In New South Wales, a major achievement for irrigators was the sector's coordinated response to WaterNSW's proposed step-change in charges. Working alongside NSW Irrigators' Council and valley organisations, Cotton Australia supported the case for efficient service delivery, fair cost allocation and transparency in the information used to justify increased costs. IPART's final determination comprehensively rejected WaterNSW's proposed average increases of around 22% per year (plus inflation), and instead introduced one year of modest price increases, while signalling it will be doing a more comprehensive review into WaterNSW and the NSW Government's water management costs, prior to making a new, longer duration Determination.

(Unfortunately as this Annual report was nearing completion IPART has completed its latest Determination and irrigators will be seeing annual increases of up to 10% plus CPI).

Of highest priority to Cotton Australia, and the northern NSW-based irrigator groups has been the slow moving, but potentially devastating reforms that may arise out of the NSW Northern Basin Connectivity Review (and related Minimum Inflows work).

There is the very real potential that if recommendations currently under consideration by the NSW Government, these reforms could reduce access to irrigation water in most northern basin valleys by 8-9%, through the instigation of rule-based changes.

These impacts would not only be devastating to the irrigation entitlement holders and their communities but also represents a fundamental attack on the water property right.

Cotton Australia is united with the northern valley irrigator groups and NSW Irrigators Council to fight these changes.

In addition to these big water issues, we have continually monitored NSW compliance and regulatory reforms, including proposed changes to water management enforcement and penalties, advocating for sound legal process and proportionate approaches. We tracked emerging issues affecting day-to-day water use and administration—such as practical interpretations of Basic Landholder Rights and concerns raised by growers about processing timeframes for trades—recognising that administrative settings can have real costs for farming businesses and supply chains.

In Queensland, Cotton Australia continued to advocate for water pricing arrangements that are fair, efficient and workable for genuine irrigators. We engaged through Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) committees—including the Water and Energy Policy Committee, chaired by Cotton Australia—to respond to pricing recommendations and broader reform proposals. While recommended charges were below what Sunwater initially proposed, forecasts still pointed to significant increases for some schemes over the regulatory period. Cotton Australia strongly supported continuation of the 15% discount on charges and urged that any support be delivered in the least bureaucratic way possible. When the Queensland Government confirmed it would continue the discount but require an application process to demonstrate eligibility, we worked with partners to highlight implementation risks and the importance of clear communication to maximise uptake among eligible irrigators.

Another significant Queensland outcome was the continuation of access to the Dawson Valley Strategic Water Infrastructure Reserve (SWIR) through a new three-year leasing opportunity. The Queensland Government announced up to 90,000 megalitres of nominal volume would be available through to 30 September 2028 at a fixed total price of \$34 per megalitre—the longest term currently available under legislation. This renewal, supported by sustained advocacy from Cotton Australia and regional partners, extends access to a total of nine years since the SWIR water was first made available. The initiative has been credited with underpinning the future of the Moura cotton gin,

where throughput has strengthened to more than 100,000 bales after falling as low as 40,000 bales in earlier years—demonstrating the direct connection between secure water access, regional processing infrastructure and local employment.

Across the year, Cotton Australia maintained a consistent presence in key forums, taking a collaborative and solutions-focused approach to water policy discussions. This included participation through the National Irrigators' Council, National Farmers' Federation water discussions, QFF policy committees and a range of valley-based networks.

We also continued to engage with agencies such as the Murray–Darling Basin Authority, including direct engagement with the Chief Executive, while maintaining regular contact with ministerial offices across all jurisdictions. This reflects an understanding that durable policy outcomes are built through ongoing, constructive engagement.

This on-the-ground and in-the-room presence has helped ensure the cotton industry contributes practical insight into how policy proposals translate into operational outcomes, investment decisions and regional communities.

Looking ahead, Cotton Australia will remain focused on safeguarding entitlement reliability, with the core focus being on the Basin Plan Review and the NSW Connectivity Review.

We thank our core partners of National Irrigators Council, National Farmers' Federation, New South Wales Irrigators' Council, Queensland Farmers' Federation and all the valley-based irrigator groups that protect our growers' rights across the footprint we operate on.

Key achievements and activities:

- Advocated consistently for the integrity of water entitlements as a property right and for policy settings that protect entitlement reliability in the MDB and Queensland.
- Established early engagement with the new Federal Minister for Environment and Water, reiterating cotton's priorities on entitlements, transparency and evidence-based water recovery.
- Supported the irrigation sector response to WaterNSW's proposed price increases; IPART rejected the proposed step-change and highlighted the potential margin impacts of the original proposal.
- Maintained readiness to respond to the NSW Northern Basin Connectivity Review/Minimum Inflows work, given the potential implications for allocation rules and reliability.
- Engaged on NSW compliance and administration issues, including proposed enforcement changes and practical concerns affecting Basic Landholder Rights and trade processing.
- Led and coordinated Queensland engagement through QFF water and energy policy processes, including advocacy for practical delivery of the 15% Sunwater discount for genuine irrigators.
- Supported renewed access to Dawson Valley SWIR water through a three-year lease process, helping underpin regional cotton expansion and the ongoing viability of the Moura cotton gin.
- Represented the industry across national and state forums, including NIC and NFF water discussions, MDBA engagement and ministerial meetings, ensuring cotton-growing communities remained central to decision-making.

ESSENTIAL GROWER SERVICES



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Cotton Australia continued to prioritise telecommunications and safety as key enablers of a productive, resilient and sustainable cotton industry. Reliable connectivity and effective safety systems remain critical to supporting growers, workers and regional communities, particularly as farming operations become more technologically advanced and geographically dispersed.

Telecommunications advocacy remained a core focus. Cotton Australia maintained active involvement with the National Farmers' Federation Telecommunications and Social Policy Committee to ensure the needs of cotton growers were represented in national discussions. Ongoing feedback was provided to telecommunications providers and government agencies on connectivity challenges, particularly in regional and remote areas where coverage gaps continue to affect safety, productivity and business continuity.

A significant development during the year was the Australian Government's announcement of the Universal Outdoor Mobile Obligation. Cotton Australia welcomed this initiative, which aims to improve access to outdoor mobile coverage for voice and text services across regional Australia. The organisation strongly supports the intent of this reform and continues to advocate for clear, enforceable minimum coverage standards that deliver reliable and measurable on-farm outcomes, rather than outcomes based solely on coverage mapping.

Satellite connectivity continued to grow in importance, with Starlink increasingly adopted by cotton growers as a supplementary solution. For many businesses, this has improved access to internet services in previously under served areas, supporting precision agriculture, remote monitoring, business operations and emergency communications. While not a substitute for reliable mobile coverage, satellite services are playing an increasing role in strengthening connectivity resilience. Competition in this space is expected to expand over the coming year, providing greater choice and system resilience for growers.

SAFETY

Work health and safety remained a cornerstone of Cotton Australia's activities. The organisation continued its partnership with Farmsafe Australia and maintained representation on relevant advisory bodies to ensure rural safety perspectives are reflected in policy development. Education and practical guidance for growers remained a priority.

Two targeted safety webinars were delivered during the year. The first addressed employer obligations relating to hearing protection, following the release of the Model Code of Practice: Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work. Delivered by Dr Richard Franklin of James Cook University, the session outlined regulatory requirements and practical risk management strategies. The second webinar, delivered by Josh Ingham of Ingham and Co, focused on workplace safety obligations for business owners. Both sessions were well received and supported improved awareness of safety responsibilities.

Training delivered through AgSkilled and SmartAg programs continued to maintain a strong safety focus, supporting growers and workers to build capability and implement practical safety measures across cotton production systems. Together, these initiatives reinforce Cotton Australia's commitment to safety and connectivity as foundations of a strong and sustainable industry.

WORKFORCE AND TRAINING



WORKFORCE AND TRAINING

Developing a skilled, safe and capable workforce remains a core priority for Cotton Australia and is essential to the productivity and long-term resilience of the industry. During the year, continued progress was made in delivering training, strengthening partnerships and advocating for workforce policies aligned with modern agriculture.

In Queensland, SmartAg QLD continued to demonstrate its value as an industry-led, government-supported training initiative. Since its commencement, the program has delivered training to more than 4,500 participants across the agricultural sector, including 1,500 from the cotton industry. This strong participation reflects demand for accessible, industry-relevant training and the effectiveness of the delivery model. Cotton Australia continues to play a key role in promoting the program across cotton-growing regions.

With the initial funding period nearing completion, Cotton Australia and the Queensland Farmers' Federation have commenced advocacy to secure continued funding. This work aims to maintain a successful pathway for workforce development and ensure ongoing access to skills training for growers, employees and regional communities.

Targeted training delivery remained a priority. Cotton Picker Operation Essentials Workshops, delivered by Real Skills Ag Training, provided practical skills development for cotton picker operators. The workshops focused on safety, machine efficiency and problem-solving for round bale pickers and were well received by both experienced operators and new entrants. Feedback highlighted the value of hands-on training in supporting safe and efficient harvest operations.

In New South Wales, AgSkilled continues to play an important role in workforce development.

Now in its eighth year, the program has delivered consistent, high-quality accredited training aligned with industry needs. During the year, AgSkilled secured a further three-year funding extension valued at \$15 million from the NSW Government. This investment provides greater certainty and supports continued training across cotton-growing regions. Cotton Australia acknowledges the strong partnership with the NSW Government and industry participants that underpins the program's success.

Workforce advocacy remained an important focus. Cotton Australia continues to represent the industry through active participation in state and national forums, including the National Farmers' Federation Workforce Committee. The organisation is also represented on committees contributing to the development of the AgTrade Apprenticeship, which aims to provide a structured pathway from school to employment in agriculture.

RESEARCH DIRECTION & STEWARDSHIP



REGULATORY

The Australian regulatory landscape is currently undergoing significant changes with a raft of regulatory reviews underway from the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), and these have the potential to impact on how Australian cotton is grown in future.

The final decision on paraquat and diquat, released in June 2026 (outside the reporting period), will affect their use in fallow, defoliation and volunteer control. Cotton Australia is working with Crop Consultants Australia and the Cotton Research and Development Corporation (CRDC) to assess the implications for cotton production systems.

Cotton Australia is actively engaging with regulators, manufacturers and other industry bodies to address the loss of access to chemistry due to regulation changes, resistance and commercial imperatives, strongly advocating for the cotton industry to be able to access new pest control technology to support current practices.

This engagement has enabled the minor use permit system to help fill gaps in pest control options. An example of this is the need for fungicides to control foliar diseases such as *Alternaria*, *Ramularia* and Target Spot, with several products now available under permit for this use.

BIOSECURITY

The cotton industry continues to focus on preparedness for biosecurity threats in conjunction with key industry partners including CRDC, CottonInfo, grower groups and agronomists.

Cotton Australia has been successful in gaining approval to recategorize Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) from medium to low impact for the industry. This reflects updated information from overseas that shows that cotton is not a preferred host for BMSB and any incursion would represent a minor threat. This means our growers would be required to contribute significantly less financially, in the event of an incursion.



**The Australian Cotton
Disease Collaboration**

RESEARCH DIRECTION

Cotton Australia biannual research panel meetings in conjunction with CRDC play an important role in informing research priorities for the cotton industry. The panel meeting in mid-2025 involved a deep dive into disease management research projects and activities. Diseases such as Black Root Rot and Verticillium are creating major production challenges for growers. Record research investments are being made into addressing these issues through the Australian Cotton Disease Collaboration (ACDC).

SPRAY DRIFT

Damage to cotton crops resulting from drift of phenoxy herbicides continues to be a major problem in some regions. Overall reports of damage were down in the 2025-26 season, with a total of 1,865 ha reported to Cotton Australia. Most of this damage occurred in two relatively small areas. Crops were severely impacted as they were subjected to multiple drift events during the season.

Cotton Australia makes significant ongoing investments into tools such as SataCrop to help growers reduce the risk of spray drift and the SnapSendSolve App for reporting incidents.

ENERGY, MINING AND CSG



ENERGY

Cotton Australia has continued its advocacy for affordable and fit-for-purpose electricity tariffs for growers and ginner. Toward the end of the reporting year, this work expanded to include the fuel and fertiliser supply situation.

In response, Cotton Australia established a dedicated channel for growers to share information on their needs and combined this with industry-wide estimates of fuel and fertiliser requirements. This information has been used to inform discussions at both state and federal taskforces. This work is ongoing.

In Queensland, Cotton Australia has engaged with Ministers, advisors and senior executives at Energy Queensland following the change of government. Key activities included:

- participation in the Queensland Competition Authority's Regulated Electricity Pricing process
- membership of the Ministerial Agricultural, Energy and Water Council
- encouraging growers to review electricity tariffs under new pricing arrangements
- facilitating a site visit to St George with senior Energy Queensland and departmental representatives.

This engagement has contributed to early progress toward improved tariff access for local irrigators.

In New South Wales, Cotton Australia continues to represent grower and ginner interests through Essential Energy's Customer Advisory Group. The NSW Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap, including the development of Renewable Energy Zones, remains an ongoing focus.

Working alongside other large energy users and regional organisations, Cotton Australia has continued to engage with government on managing potential impacts on electricity costs over the longer term.

COAL SEAM GAS AND MINING

In Queensland, Cotton Australia's focus in the first half of the year was on advocating for an effective Subsidence Management Framework. Engagement has continued with Coexistence Queensland, which now covers both coal seam gas and renewable energy developments.

In the second half of the year, attention shifted to proposed legislative changes relating to the Condamine Alluvium. The Regional Planning Interests (Condamine Alluvium) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 was introduced late in the reporting period.

While intended to strengthen protections, the proposed changes would remove key provisions of the existing Regional Planning Interests Act, including established approval processes. At the close of the reporting year, Cotton Australia, alongside Queensland Farmers' Federation and Central Downs Irrigators Limited, was advocating for:

- the retention of existing Regional Planning Interests Act provisions, or
- reconsideration of the Bill in its current form.

In New South Wales, Cotton Australia continues to monitor mining and coal seam gas developments that may affect the industry. This includes ongoing oversight of Santos' activities in the Namoi Valley and Liverpool Plains, with a focus on ensuring commitments to landholder consent are maintained.



ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AND NATIVE VEGETATION

Proposed reforms to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 were a key area of focus during the year, particularly in relation to biodiversity and native vegetation.

Cotton Australia has worked with the National Farmers' Federation on this issue, both leading up to and following the commencement of reform processes in December 2025. At the time of writing, there remains uncertainty about how routine agricultural practices will be assessed under the updated framework.

A key concern is that the implementation phase has not fully recognised the role agriculture already plays in managing ecosystem services, including:

- maintaining soil health
- supporting beneficial insects and biodiversity refuges
- managing native vegetation within farming landscapes.

Cotton Australia continues to advocate for:

- clear, agriculture-specific guidance
- practical implementation pathways for growers
- broader collaboration between farmers, governments and customers to support biodiversity outcomes through equitable funding models.

In the interim, *myBMP* continues to support growers in demonstrating good practice through integrated pest management and natural resource management actions aligned with emerging requirements.

THE 2025 COTTON COLLECTIVE

TOOWOOMBA



The 2025 Cotton Collective was held in August in Toowoomba, Queensland and brought together more than 300 growers, researchers, sponsors and industry representatives.

Held every two years in the alternate year to the Australian Cotton Conference, the Collective is a forum to share information, explore innovation and engage with the latest developments in cotton production.

The three-day program opened with an optional innovation bus tour across the Darling Downs,

including visits to SwarmFarm, Bayer's laboratory, RDO and Excel Agriculture, providing insight into on-farm technology development and manufacturing.

The conference program included sessions on farm business performance, family farm management, industry leadership and Australian cotton's position in global markets.

Innovation and technology were a central focus across the event, particularly the increasing role of automation, artificial intelligence and drone use in farming systems.

Speakers encouraged practical engagement with new technologies, with CSIRO's Dr Stefan Hajkowitz noting that growers can begin using AI tools without advanced technical skills. Global market commentary from Louis Dreyfus Company's Joe Nicosia highlighted the importance of understanding competition from alternative fibres.

Practical sessions such as Practical Tech on the Farm and Megatrends and the Australian Cotton Industry explored how technology is being applied on-farm, including drone spraying, irrigation efficiency and data use in decision-making.



Other key themes included:

- Basin Plan outcomes and future water management
- Sustainability in a Global World
- Practical Tech on the Farm
- R&D updates
- Industry leadership

The accompanying trade exhibition featured approximately 75 exhibitors showcasing new equipment, irrigation systems, farm inputs and technology solutions relevant to cotton production.

The event concluded with the National Cotton Industry Awards Dinner, recognising excellence across the sector.

This was the final Cotton Collective, following the decision to hold the Cotton Industry Awards every two years, in line with the Australian Cotton Conference. This change allows for greater celebration of recipients at the biennial Cotton Conference on the Gold Coast and a bigger, bolder Grower of the Year Field Day in alternate years.

NATIONAL COTTON INDUSTRY AWARDS DINNER



2025 COTTON INDUSTRY AWARD RECIPIENTS

The 2025 Australian Cotton Industry Awards were presented at the Cotton Collective Dinner in Toowoomba, recognising individuals and businesses contributing to innovation, leadership and industry performance.

Bayer Cotton Growers of the Year:
Merrilong Agricultural Company (Hugh and Jock Brownhill), recognised for their focus on family knowledge, teamwork and farm management.

AgriRisk High Achiever Award:

Tyson and Rosie Armitage, Wamara Farming Trust, recognised for their operational management and collaboration within a family farming business.

CRDC Chris Lehmann Young Cotton Achiever of the Year:

Grace Griffiths, recognised for her work in agronomy, GIS and industry engagement, as well as contributions to careers promotion in agriculture and carbon communication.

Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year:

Dr Murray Sharman, recognised for his work in plant virology, diagnostics and biosecurity preparedness relevant to the cotton industry.

The Incitec Pivot Fertilisers Service to the Cotton Industry Award recognised Boggabri grower Andrew Watson.

Andrew was the 2008 Cotton Grower of the Year and is highly regarded by all in the Australian cotton industry for his tireless efforts at improving the reputation of Australian cotton.



Grace Griffiths (CRDC Chris Lehmann Young Cotton Achiever of the Year)



Hugh and Jock Brownhill (Bayer Cotton Growers of the Year)



Tyson and Rosie Armitage (AgriRisk High Achiever Award)



Dr Murray Sharman (Cotton Seed Distributors Researcher of the Year)

The guest speaker at the 2025 Cotton Awards Dinner in Toowoomba was former Queensland Labor Minister and highly regarded maxillofacial surgeon Dr Anthony Lynham. In a wide-ranging talk, Dr Lynham focused on the role of the Jamieson Trauma Institute and its work to promote the “Stop the Bleed” initiative.

Dr Lynham made it clear that one of the key actions a first aider can take to improve a patient’s outcome is to quickly and effectively stem bleeding from injuries.

The Institute, through the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital Foundation, was the Cotton Collective’s preferred charity and from that engagement Cotton Australia has entered into a

three-year agreement to support the “Stop the Bleed” program as one of Cotton Australia’s Here for Good projects.

As part of the agreement, the Stop the Bleed program will provide regular training and awareness opportunities for the cotton industry, as well as acknowledging the ongoing support of the industry.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Cotton Australia Annual General Meeting was held during the Cotton Collective in Toowoomba.

LIZ STOTT, Leeton cotton grower, was elected Chair, following two years as Deputy Chair under outgoing Chair Nigel Burnett.

Three Board positions were declared vacant, and the following appointments were confirmed:

TONY GEITZ – Industry representative and CEO of Northern Cotton Pty Ltd, with previous senior leadership experience at Louis Dreyfus Company.

GAVIN DAL BROI – Irrigated grower from the Southern Valleys and co-founder of Rivcott Gin, one of the world's highest-volume cotton gins by annual production.

ROBERT DUGDALE – Returned Board member with extensive executive experience across research, sales, marketing and management in multinational and Australian companies.

The meeting acknowledged retiring Chair Nigel Burnett for 12 years of service on the Board, including four years as Chair, and outgoing Director Arthur Spellson for his contribution to the organisation.



Liz Stott



Tony Geitz



Gavin Dal Broi



Robert Dugdale

~ THE 2026 ~ AUSTRALIAN COTTON GROWER FIELD DAY

More than 300 growers, agronomists and industry representatives from cotton growing areas across New South Wales and Queensland travelled to Spring Ridge, NSW for the opportunity to learn from Merrilong Agricultural Company, the 2025 Bayer Cotton Growers of the Year.

Brothers Hugh and Jock Brownhill and their cousins Oscar and Archie Brownhill showcased their award-winning farm, providing insight into how teamwork and collaboration drive their farming and business decisions to achieve success across generations.

The Field Day included the popular panel session with the Brownhill family and their advisory board, a Q&A session with 2025 AgriRisk High Achiever Tyson Armitage, and several guest presentations covering international cotton insights, industry considerations, business transitions, global food production trends and resilience lessons.

>> see the image gallery on the following pages

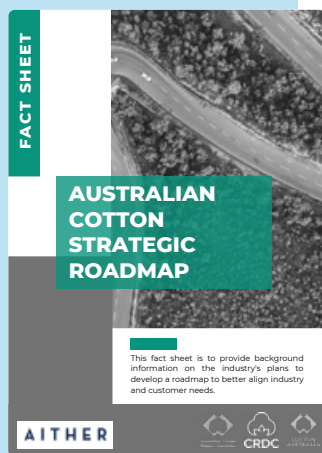






AUSTRALIAN COTTON STRATEGIC ROADMAP

PROTECTING GROWER VALUE TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE



THE AUSTRALIAN COTTON STRATEGIC ROADMAP AND WHY IT MATTERS

The Australian Cotton Strategic Roadmap is designed to protect Australian cotton's market position and grower returns in a changing global market.

Australian cotton has built its reputation on quality, reliability and sustainability. However, expectations from buyers, brands and governments are rising quickly, particularly around traceability, sustainability data and human rights. At the same time, competitor countries are investing heavily to meet these requirements.

The Roadmap ensures the industry responds early and in a measured way, rather than reacting late at higher cost.

It focuses on maintaining market access and Australia's premium position, rather than trying to create new or unproven premiums.

Work began in late 2022 and has been shaped by extensive engagement with growers, industry and supply chain partners. Research consistently shows the priority is to protect existing value and market position, rather than assume future price gains.

THE ROADMAP KEY TOPICS:



Sustainability (through *myBMP*)



Traceability



Data



Human rights



Marketing Australian cotton



RESEARCH FOCUS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS: TRACEABILITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE *myBMP* REVIEW

Over the past year, the Roadmap has moved from broad strategy into practical research and testing of what is required, and what is not. The focus has been on traceability, human rights and the review of *myBMP*.

TRACEABILITY



Research confirms that demand for traceable cotton is currently limited but is likely to grow, driven by brand commitments and emerging regulation, particularly in Europe.

It also makes clear that an end-to-end farm-to-retail system is neither necessary nor cost-effective for Australian cotton.

Instead, a staged approach is recommended: strengthening traceability from farm to spinner, where the industry has control and accountability, and integrating with existing global systems such as the Better Cotton Initiative to meet downstream requirements.

HUMAN RIGHTS



Expectations in human rights are increasing globally, including in markets where Australia already has strong labour standards.

The key risk identified is not poor practice, but the ability to demonstrate performance in a consistent and credible way.

Recommended actions are proportionate: an industry human rights statement, a shared grievance mechanism with other agricultural industries, improved data collection, and embedding human rights into existing systems such as *myBMP*, rather than creating new standalone processes.

myBMP REVIEW



The review confirmed that *myBMP* remains a valued farm-level program but must evolve to maintain future market access.

Global buyers are increasingly expecting independent verification and alignment with international standards, while growers continue to emphasise the need for practicality, affordability and a focus on on-farm performance.

OVERALL DIRECTION FROM RESEARCH



Across all three areas, the message is consistent: doing nothing carries risk, but overbuilding systems is also unnecessary.

The preferred approach is minimum viable products now, with the ability to scale only where future market requirements clearly justify it.

*my*BMP



Grower Voice Tour - Rob Holmes and Jon Welsh (Moree)

LISTENING FIRST: THE ROADMAP ROADSHOW AND WHAT GROWERS TOLD US

A key feature of the process was the Australian Cotton Strategic Roadmap Roadshow held across all cotton regions between July and September 2025. More than 300 growers and industry participants attended 13 workshops.

Three key messages came through:

- The issues identified in the Roadmap are real and unavoidable if Australian cotton is to remain competitive
- Value needs to be explained simply, with a focus on protecting returns rather than future benefits
- Keep systems simple and connected, avoiding duplication and unnecessary complexity



Grower Voice Tour - Brooke Summers (Moree)

WHAT'S NEXT: AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS AND STAGED IMPLEMENTATION

The Boards of Cotton Australia and CRDC have agreed to six integrated recommendations to progress the Roadmap through to 2028.

These focus on integration, staging and future readiness.

- **Integrated delivery:**
Sustainability, traceability, data and human rights will be delivered as one connected system rather than separate initiatives.
- **myBMP evolution:**
myBMP will remain a grower-focused program while aligning with global expectations.
- **Phased traceability:**
Initial focus is farm-to-spinner traceability via the CRDC Data Platform, followed by integration with Better Cotton. Further development will depend on clear commercial value and co-funding.
- **Human rights approach:**
Measures will be embedded into existing systems and aligned with international expectations, without creating separate reporting requirements.
- **Marketing and promotion:**
To be developed once foundational systems are in place, strengthening

Australian cotton's positioning with buyers and brands.

- **Governance and delivery:**
An integrated model will be formalised to clarify roles, reduce duplication and improve cost sharing.

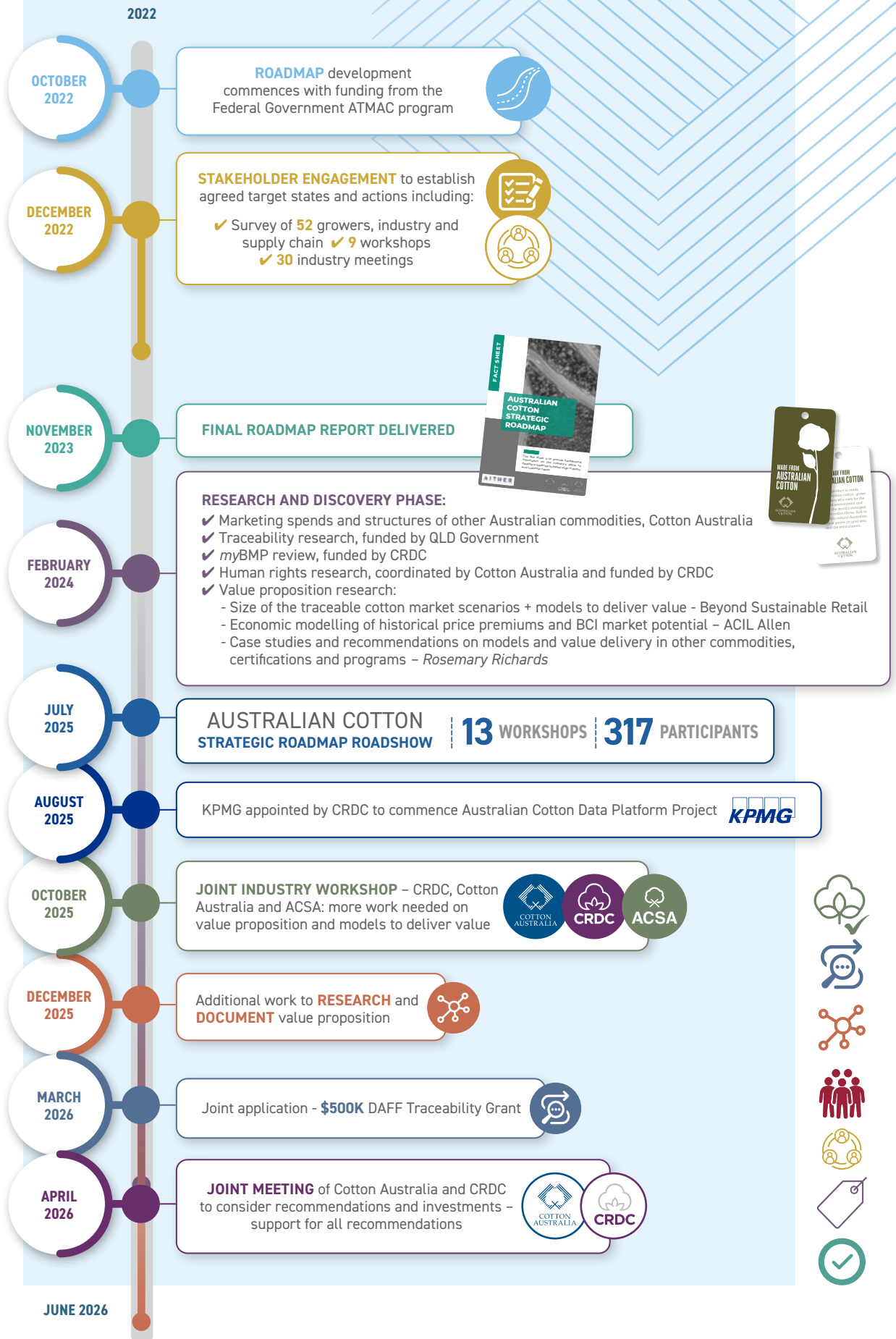
THE VALUE PROPOSITION FOR GROWERS

The Australian Cotton Strategic Roadmap is focused on protecting grower value now and into the future. Research shows Australia's cotton price premium, built on quality and reputation, could be at risk if the industry does not keep pace with changing expectations.

Investment is being staged and tightly focused. The industry is avoiding unnecessary build and long-term commitments until there is clearer direction on regulation, customer demand and cost sharing. Minimum viable products are being used to keep options open for future requirements such as digital product passports and new compliance settings.

For growers, this provides confidence that levy funds are being used to protect market access, manage risk and avoid higher-cost responses later. The Roadmap is about maintaining Australian cotton's reputation and competitiveness in key markets, not chasing new trends.

ROADMAP TIMELINE



SUSTAINABILITY



PLANET. PEOPLE. Paddock.

Work continued during the year to implement the Australian cotton industry's sustainability framework, PLANET. PEOPLE. Paddock., a joint initiative of Cotton Australia and CRDC. The framework provides a whole-of-industry approach to identifying, measuring and reporting on environmental, social and economic priorities, while supporting the industry's response to evolving stakeholder expectations.

A key milestone was the release of the industry's third five-yearly sustainability report, the 2024 Australian Cotton Sustainability Report. This iteration adopted an integrated reporting approach, bringing together environmental, social and economic performance in a single framework.

The report provides transparent information on the resources the industry relies on and how they are managed, including:

- data on dependencies, impacts, risks and opportunities
- insights to support industry decision-making and risk management
- information aligned with customer and stakeholder expectations.

This transparency also supports ongoing access to key markets.

The report adopted an updated structure aligned with emerging global reporting expectations and was supported by the launch of the Australian Cotton Sustainability website. The website provides a central location for sustainability reports, supporting summaries and detailed data, improving transparency and access to industry information.

During the year, the industry also finalised a revamped sustainability data framework. Developed over two years, the framework reviewed a range of standards and guidelines and identified an initial list of around 150 indicators.

This was refined to a core set of 44 farm-level indicators covering the key data points most commonly requested across the value chain, while also providing insight into the natural and human resources farms rely on.

The framework is designed to:

- improve consistency in sustainability measurement
- reduce reporting burden for growers
- provide clearer and more comparable data across the industry.

Additional work during the year included:

- six-monthly meetings of the Australian Cotton Sustainability Reference Group to help ensure the framework remains credible and aligned with community expectations
- cotton industry representation in the Australian Agriculture Sustainability Framework Community of Practice
- ongoing advocacy with federal and state governments on low carbon agriculture, soil health and nature positive initiatives, including carbon farming and natural capital markets.



PLANET

Water, greenhouse gases, native vegetation, pesticides, soil health.

PEOPLE

Workplace and working conditions, wellbeing.

PADDOCK

Productivity, profitability.



Soil Health



Water



Native Vegetation



GHG Emissions



Pesticides



Workplace



Productivity



Economic Contribution



The Australian Cotton industry releases an annual sustainability update, accompanied by a summary of the update for those who want to read less, and an Excel data pack for those wanting to dig deeper.

myBMP AND BETTER COTTON



Better Cotton representatives visiting the Stott farm in Leeton



PROGRESS ON TRACEABLE COTTON

Last year we were excited to announce physical traceable Better Cotton from Australia for the first time.

A total of 1,566,257 bales were sold as Better Cotton, with 47% sold as mass balance and 25% sold as physical traceable Better Cotton.

MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF myBMP

Maintaining the integrity of myBMP is a key focus of Cotton Australia. Cotton Australia welcomed Better Cotton delegates this year to conduct an audit of our independent auditors for cotton farms. The auditors found our audit system to be robust with a high level of integrity.

The visit also allowed Cotton Australia staff and growers to discuss several key issues with Better Cotton and negotiate positive outcomes for our growers. These included the use of highly hazardous pesticides and acceptance of the current ginning process used in Australia for segregation of cotton.

MEASURING CLIMATE IMPACTS PROJECT

Measuring climate impacts project funded by the Better Cotton Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF) has commenced. The project is being coordinated by CRDC and NSW DPIRD has been engaged to deliver the project. Presently collaborators are being finalised across southern Queensland and NSW.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN myBMP OVER THE PAST YEAR

- + Increasing myBMP farm certifications from 503 to 663 in 2026 representing a 32% increase.
- + Increasing of myBMP certified businesses from 140 to 188 businesses representing a 34% increase.
- + A forecast of 53% of the 2025-26 Australian Cotton Crop will be myBMP certified. Up 3% from last season.
- + A forecast of 41% of the 2025-26 Australian Cotton Crop will be eligible to be traded as physical Better Cotton.

Associate Professor Guy Roth (University of Sydney) with Adam Kay and Kieran Shephard (Farm Manager)



COTTON TO MARKET

Cotton Australia Brand Manager - Ashley Hollis (Sussan promotion, International Women's Day)

The Cotton to Market program continues to deliver strong, measurable outcomes for Australian cotton growers by growing demand, strengthening market access and enhancing the reputation of Australian cotton across global supply chains. Over the past year, the program has achieved record growth in the Australian Cotton Mark licensing program, deepened engagement with leading brands and retailers, and generated significant media and consumer exposure.

DEMAND FOR AUSTRALIAN COTTON CONTINUES TO ACCELERATE

A central focus of the Cotton to Market program is to ensure Australian cotton remains a fibre of choice for brands and retailers, translating on farm sustainability and quality into market recognition and demand. This year delivered exceptional results.

In 2025, more than 64.5 million units carrying the Australian Cotton Mark were processed through the Licensing program—a 92 per cent increase on the previous year. Applications to use the Cotton Marks increased by 119 per cent, following similarly strong growth in earlier years, reflecting growing brand confidence in Australian cotton's quality, credibility and sustainability credentials.

Cumulatively, the Cotton to Market program has now supported more than 150 million licensed product units over its 13 year history. By early 2026, licensed product volumes were already tracking well ahead of the previous year, with applications up by more than 75 per cent year to date.

This growth is being driven largely by major Australian retailers scaling their use of Australian cotton, particularly Target, Big W and Sussan Group and wholesaler Caprice. For growers, this growth reinforces the value of industry led sustainability and the importance of maintaining strong market relationships in a competitive global environment.



THE 2025 AUSTRALIAN COTTON FORUM

A standout moment for the Cotton to Market program this year was the 2025 Australian Cotton Forum, held in Sydney in July. The Forum was designed as a showcase of the Australian cotton industry — focusing on topics such as quality, sustainability and innovation.

More than 120 representatives from brands, retailers and not for profit organisations attended the one day Forum, many of whom play a direct role in sourcing and fibre decision making.

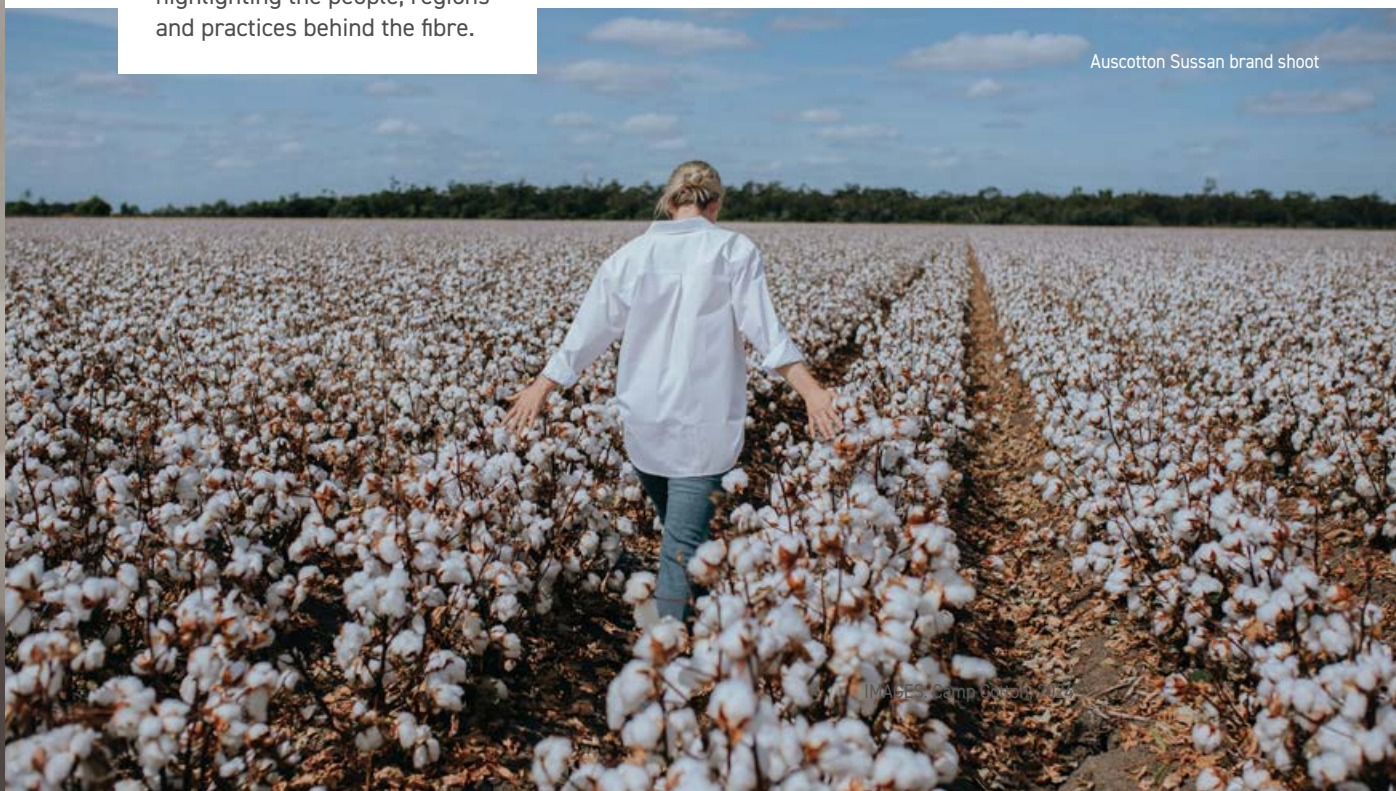
Across the day, participants heard directly from growers, researchers and industry leaders, gaining insight into Australian cotton's sustainability systems, research capability, traceability pathway and future direction. The program deliberately moved beyond technical detail to focus on industry collaboration — highlighting the people, regions and practices behind the fibre.



Australian Cotton Forum - panel



Australian Cotton Forum - grower panel



Auscotton Sussan brand shoot

IMAGES: CAMP DENOVY



DEEP AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT AND POLICY INFLUENCE

Beyond licensing, Cotton to Market remains highly active in direct engagement with brands, retailers, NGOs and supply chain partners both in Australia and globally. Over the past year, the team delivered hundreds of interactions, including meetings, presentations, training programs, farm visits and industry briefings to ensure Australian cotton is recognised and rewarded for its credentials by the market.

These engagements focused on:

- Working with Textile Exchange on its new stakeholder engagement approach and Materials Matter standard
- Australian cotton production systems and fibre quality
- Sustainability frameworks such as *myBMP* and membership of the Better Cotton Initiative
- Traceability, data and emerging regulatory requirements
- Opportunities for marketing, storytelling and direct farmer connection

Engagements spanned Australia, New Zealand and international markets, ensuring Australian cotton remains visible and well understood by sourcing, sustainability and marketing teams alike. Feedback consistently highlighted the value of Australian cotton's transparency, grower led systems and strong sustainability narrative.

~ CASE STUDY ~

COLLABORATING WITH BRANDS

The partnership between Cotton Australia and leading brands demonstrates how collaboration can transform Australian cotton from a raw material into a meaningful consumer story.

The Cotton to Market team has delivered several co-branded campaigns alongside brands that share the values of Australian cotton—sustainability, quality, and longevity. Featured partners have included Sussan, Primi, Dri-Glo, and Country Road.

For growers and the broader industry, these partnerships highlight how cotton grown on Australian farms can be showcased authentically, reinforcing pride in the product and strengthening consumer trust.

As one grower involved in the campaign observed:

It makes us feel proud and optimistic to see trusted Australian brands choosing to support locally grown cotton. Being part of agriculture, it's encouraging to see the hard work of Australian farmers recognised and valued in such a visible way.

Annabel Burge – GROWER



MEDIA, MARKETING AND CONSUMER VISIBILITY

The Cotton to Market program continues to generate strong media and social media coverage by leveraging brand partnerships and high quality storytelling. Throughout the year, Australian cotton featured prominently across retail catalogues, brand websites and social media channels, collectively reaching millions of consumers.

Key moments included:

- National retail catalogue features highlighting Australian cotton
- Brand led campaigns supporting World Cotton Day
- Ongoing promotion of Australian cotton through digital channels
- Strong engagement with the Let's Talk e newsletter, achieving consistently high open rates

Media activity also extended to global sustainability discussions, with Cotton Australia contributing to international dialogue on issues such as life cycle assessment and traceability — reinforcing Australia's leadership and protecting cotton's reputation in an increasingly complex policy environment.

COMMUNICATIONS

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH GROWER-LED STORYTELLING



Effective communication remains central to delivering the priorities of Cotton Australia's Strategic Plan 2023–2028, with a continued focus on maintaining trust in the cotton industry and broader community.

Throughout the year, the communications team expanded its digital-first approach to showcase the people, practices and communities behind Australian cotton. Grower-led storytelling remained central to this strategy, with farmers sharing their own experiences, challenges and innovations directly from their farms.

Content generation included written stories, photography, on-farm visits and video production focused on:

- sustainable farming practices
- innovation and technology
- environmental stewardship
- community involvement
- industry leadership.

The social media-first trust campaign continued throughout the year, taking audiences directly onto cotton farms to answer common questions about Australian cotton production and improve transparency around the industry.

Coleambally grower Joe Briggs featured prominently in the campaign, including a series of short-form videos addressing common misconceptions about cotton farming.

The campaign also extended to national broadcast opportunities, including the Sunrise live broadcast from the McVeigh family farm in Dalby ahead of World Cotton Day 2025 before heading to the LDC gin. The broadcast highlighted family farming, environmental stewardship, regional communities and the export value of Australian cotton, with locals coming together to support the event.



DIGITAL REACH AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Cotton Australia's digital audiences continued to grow strongly during the year, reflecting changing media consumption habits and increasing engagement with grower-led content.

SOCIAL MEDIA RESULTS

- Reach exceeded **3.4 million people**
- Videos viewed more than **1.8 million times**
- More than **1,600 audience questions** and comments received
- Followers **increased by 24 per cent.**

The most viewed video for the year, *Five things you didn't know about cotton* featuring Joe Briggs, received more than 560,000 views.

Cotton Australia continued to use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok and YouTube to engage with audiences and deliver grower-led content to broader community audiences.



SUPPORTING GROWERS AND INDUSTRY CAPABILITY

Supporting growers with timely and practical information remained an important focus throughout the year.

Regular webinars were introduced covering:

- workplace health and safety requirements
- water policy updates.

The communications team also supported sustainability activities across the industry through:

- the launch of the Australian Sustainability Framework website
- sustainability content shared through the PLANET. PEOPLE. Paddock. e-newsletter
- eight new myBMP grower video case studies showcasing certified farming businesses and best practice.



[AUSTRALIANCOTTONSUSTAINABILITY.ORG.AU](https://australiancottonsustainability.org.au)



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder engagement remained an important part of Cotton Australia's communications approach, with the communications team working closely with growers, regional communities, industry organisations, government representatives and media outlets.

Regional visits throughout the year created opportunities to:

- engage directly with growers
- capture local stories
- support regional media coverage
- strengthen relationships with stakeholders.

Regional Managers continued to play an important role in identifying local stories and supporting grower engagement across cotton-growing regions.



TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

Community Trust in the Australian Cotton Industry research is conducted every two years in partnership with CRDC, the latest report showing a continued gradual improvement in community trust and acceptance of the Australian cotton industry.

The research identified the industry's contribution to regional communities and Australia's export economy as key strengths recognised by the public.

TOP INFORMATION SOURCES ABOUT THE COTTON INDUSTRY



30%
INTERNET



21%
TELEVISION
NEWS



16%
SOCIAL
MEDIA



13%
CURRENT
AFFAIRS



12%
FRIENDS
& FAMILY

KEY TRUST THEMES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY

✓ TRANSPARENCY ✓ ACCOUNTABILITY ✓ AWARENESS ✓ ENVIRONMENT



ABC AND MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

During the year, the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) responded to Cotton Australia's complaint regarding the ABC Four Corners program Water Grab, finding the ABC breached accuracy and impartiality provisions within its Code of Practice.

The finding followed an earlier ACMA ruling regarding the Four Corners program Cash Splash, which was also found to have breached the Code following action by Cotton Australia.

Following the ruling, Cotton Australia continued discussions with ABC management and government stakeholders regarding media accountability and accurate reporting on the cotton industry.



CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP AND INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENTS

Communications activities supported a range of industry leadership initiatives and recognition programs during the year. Activities included:

- the Grower of the Year Field Day at Merrilong Agriculture
- announcement of the 2026 Australian Future Cotton Leaders cohort
- promotion of the 2025 Cotton Industry Awards at the Cotton Collective in Toowoomba.

These activities generated strong engagement across digital and traditional media channels while helping showcase leadership, innovation and excellence across the Australian cotton industry.



During the year, Sophie Drysdale was appointed Media and Communications Specialist. Based in Moree and connected to the cotton industry, Sophie's appointment strengthened Cotton Australia's regional storytelling and media engagement capability.

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY



Darrin Davies, Ben Fordham (2GB) and cotton grower Joe Briggs



60 Minutes feature on Australian cotton with Andrew Watson

Cotton Australia continued to strengthen relationships with mainstream and regional media outlets throughout the year, generating positive coverage across a range of national and regional platforms.

Media highlights included:

- Channel 9's *60 Minutes* feature on Australian cotton and tariffs featuring Andrew Watson
- Joe Briggs appearing on Sydney radio station 2GB with Ben Fordham
- Seven Sunrise broadcasting nationally from the Darling Downs for World Cotton Day
- Coverage in *The Land* featuring Australian wool and cotton industries at World Expo Osaka
- Ausbiz coverage featuring Adam Kay discussing fuel, fertiliser and freight pressures
- Seven News coverage recognising Australian agriculture reaching the \$100 billion milestone
- Coverage of the expanded Australian Future Cotton Leaders program.

The communications team also continued to support Cotton Australia's advocacy work through media engagement, stakeholder communications and rapid response activity on industry issues.

EDUCATION



Students from Emerald Christian College

Cotton Australia's education program continues to provide high-quality resources, hands-on learning experiences, and career pathway opportunities for students of all ages to explore the Australian cotton industry. Through a combination of curriculum-aligned materials, teacher engagement, student programs, and industry partnerships, the program supports greater awareness and understanding of cotton production across Australia.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND CLASSROOMS

Recognising that teachers are the primary gateway to students, the education program prioritises equipping educators with accessible, classroom-ready resources aligned to the Australian Curriculum, which includes 168 references to food and fibre production.

The Cotton Classroom, hosted on the Cotton Australia website, provides a comprehensive hub of learning materials across multiple subject areas and year levels. It also enables teachers to order Cotton Sample Kits, which include posters, raw cotton, and ginned cotton to support tactile learning experiences.

During the reporting period:

- The Cotton Classroom recorded more than 10,000 unique views.
- The top five educational videos attracted over 12,000 views.
- A total of 270 Cotton Sample Kits were distributed to schools.

A new classroom resource, *Working with Data: Australian Cotton Production*, was released to strengthen student understanding of data-driven decision-making in agriculture. The resource supports students in analysing industry data, identifying trends, and understanding the roles of growers, government, and stakeholders.





"Teach the Teacher" program, Emerald

TEACHER ENGAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The "Teach the Teacher" program remains a cornerstone of engagement, providing immersive, on-farm learning experiences. A total of 148 teachers attended events across Emerald, Moura, Goondiwindi, Kununurra, Trangie, Moree, Warren, and Leeton/Griffith, gaining first-hand insight into cotton production and local career opportunities.

Cotton Australia also participated in the Sydney STEM Teacher Festival, attended by 500 educators, policymakers, and industry representatives. In collaboration with MLA and PIEFA, Cotton Australia supported networking opportunities and promoted the role of cotton as a teaching tool in STEM education.

Additionally, participation in the PIEFA Conference in Canberra enabled direct engagement with 170 educators and stakeholders. Cotton Australia delivered presentations, facilitated workshops, and supported two early-career teachers through scholarships, strengthening industry connections and professional development outcomes.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the year, Cotton Australia engaged students through both classroom presentations and field-based experiences. Activities ranged from targeted school visits to large-scale events and excursions supported by regional managers.

A highlight was the annual Barker College HSC Agriculture lecture, which reached approximately 45% of Greater Sydney students undertaking the 2025 HSC Agriculture exam. Practical learning was also supported through excursions such as Caryina High School's visit to Windy Station, where students undertook a farm case study.



Jenny Hughes and Adam Kay with Scott Graham (Head of Agriculture at Barker College)

MAJOR EVENTS AND OUTREACH

SYDNEY, ROYAL EASTER SHOW

The Sydney Royal Easter Show remained a key engagement platform. Enhancements to the cotton exhibit, including a round module, mini cotton gin and immersive storytelling elements, significantly improved visitor engagement.



OVER THE 12-DAY EVENT:

MORE THAN

2,600 visitors

engaged with the exhibit daily.

OVER

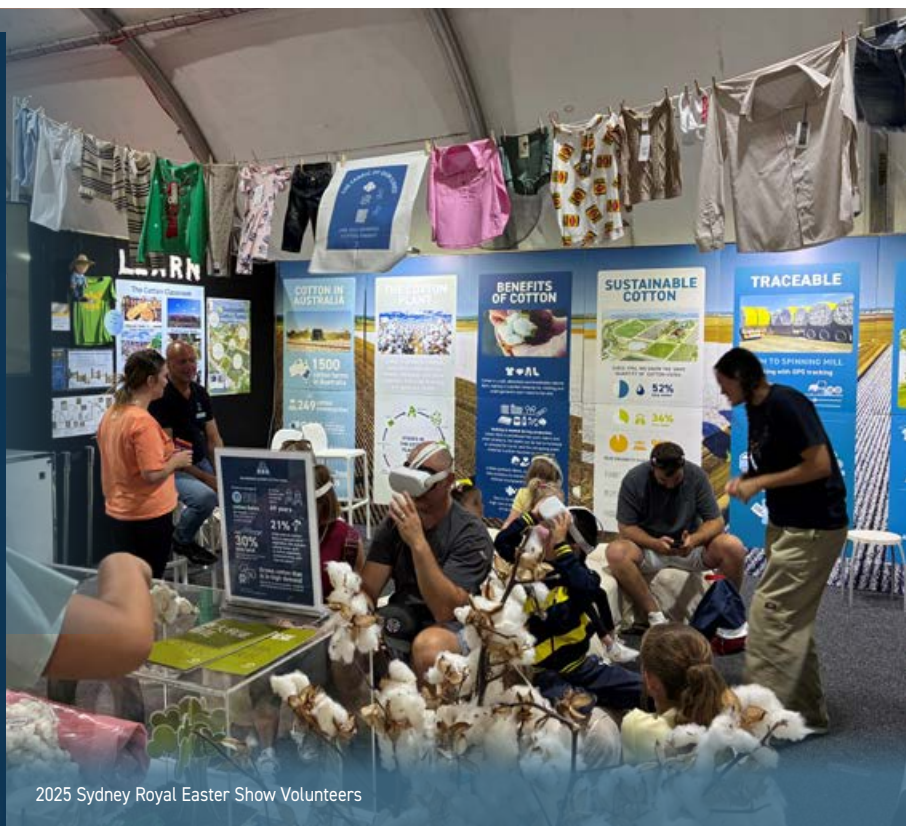
31,000 people

experienced the display overall.

APPROXIMATELY

500 people per day

participated in the virtual reality cotton farming experience.



2025 Sydney Royal Easter Show Volunteers

BRISBANE, EKKA

Similarly, the Ekka attracted over 425,000 attendees through the entry gates, with the cotton display featuring interactive elements, machinery, and grower engagement. Growers played an important role in representing the industry, reinforcing authenticity and strengthening community connections.

Cotton Australia staff and growers welcomed visits from Federal and State Elected Members to the Cotton Australia Stand at the Brisbane Ekka





Howard Coggan at the University of Queensland Agricultural Science Society's Beers n Careers event.

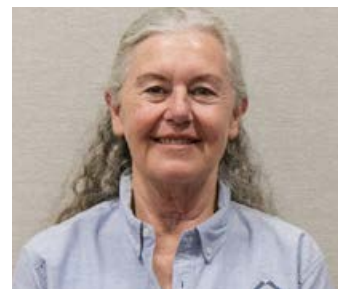
CAREER PATHWAYS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Cotton Australia continues to play an active role in promoting agricultural careers through targeted initiatives. Participation in Discover Ag engaged more than 500 senior students in hands-on sessions and career exploration activities.

Cotton Australia remains a partner in the National Farmers' Federation's AgCAREERSTART program. In 2025, 55 participants were placed on farms nationally, including seven across five cotton farms in New South Wales.

Two participants were further supported to attend the Cotton Collective as part of their professional development.

University engagement remained a priority, with networking events such as "Beers and Careers" and the Science Industry Networking Night connecting students with industry professionals. These initiatives provide valuable insights into the cotton supply chain and highlight diverse career pathways within the sector.



INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Cotton Australia also extended its reach through media and partnerships. Engagement with Fizzics Education via podcast provided an opportunity to address common misconceptions about cotton and promote its application as a STEM teaching tool.

Collaboration with organisations including PIEFA, National Agricultural Association and tertiary institutions further strengthened the program's impact, ensuring consistent messaging and broader reach across the education and agricultural sectors.





NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Northern CGA field day

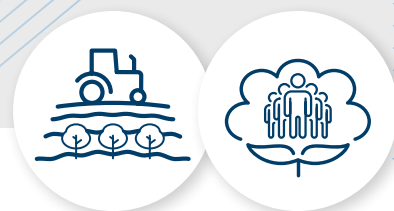
In 2025/26 the Northern Australia Manager made significant progress towards strengthening policy, partnerships, and regional development positions on environment, land tenure, water planning, biosecurity, trade and international relationships with our northern neighbours and emerging industry priorities.

Key activities undertaken, predominantly in the Northern Territory and Kimberley region of WA, on behalf of members and the broader industry, are outlined in this report.

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA BIOSECURITY STRATEGY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

The Northern Australia Manager has been an active representative on the Northern Australia Biosecurity Strategy committee, contributing towards shaping a coordinated, tri-jurisdictional

approach to safeguarding all northern industries and communities. Key achievements included proactive planning toolbox sessions that determine pathways for complex and important issues facing Northern Australia industries, advocating for risk-based surveillance systems, improved cross border coordination, and the integration of Indigenous ranger groups into frontline biosecurity operations. This work ensures members' interests are reflected in national preparedness and response frameworks.



STATE AND COMMONWEALTH SUBMISSIONS

In January this year, a submission was provided to the Commonwealth Government's Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia, addressing priorities for emerging industries with an emphasis on the requirements to support a viable and sustainable northern cotton industry. Recommendations included enabling infrastructure, streamlining regulation, bolstering livestock production systems through by-products of the ginning process feed, northern trade supply and export capabilities, Indigenous economic opportunities and tailored agricultural workforce development. The Northern Australia Manager and General Manager were invited to present to the committee at a public hearing in early March to further explain the importance and value proposition the Australian cotton industry brings to the north. A follow up report is being delivered on gaps to assisting trade out of Northern Australia ports. Additionally, feedback was provided on the performance and role of the NT Coordinator General, advocating for improved transparency, clearer project pathways, and stronger community engagement.

All these activities, excluding many others over the year, demonstrate the focus on strengthening Northern Australia's resilience, economic diversification, community wellbeing, and educating how and where the cotton industry fits within these northern endeavours. Efforts to ensure our members' interests are represented in key policy forums, strategic planning processes, and national decision-making platforms remain paramount.

STATE OF WATER ROUNDTABLE AND FORUMS

Cotton Australia was invited to contribute at a roundtable on the NT State of Water reporting process with Ricardo Group in Darwin, emphasising the need for transparent, science-driven water governance. Contributions focused on groundwater sustainability, improved hydrogeological datasets, and the importance of culturally informed water management. This work strengthens the evidence base for future allocation decisions and supports long-term water security for industry and communities. Engagement with all key stakeholders and industry ensured robust rounded perspectives were provided for feasibility purposes. This information will be used to drive the strategic pathway of the Territory Water Policy.

Engagement in the development of the first ever Fitzroy-Derby Water Planning Framework has supported the future opportunities for cropping diversification across the Kimberley. A proposed 75GL of ground water available across a catchment area of 107,000km² to encourage regional economic development across the Kimberley could enable seasonal cropping expansion beyond the Ord Valley. Consultation of the draft plan and submissions are currently open at the time of writing this report, closing on 30 June.

ORD INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY EXPANSION GROUP

As a member of the Ord Industry and Community Reference Group, participation quarterly in strategic planning and reviewing for the next phase of Ord development (2024-34) under the WA Government's Ord Expansion Strategy Framework. To date, contributions included recommendations on prioritising strategic direction set, advocating for sustainable agricultural expansion, improved water infrastructure, and community centred development pathways. Engagement with Traditional Owners, local government, community, and industry partners ensure a balanced approach to economic growth and environmental stewardship building on the strength of the region.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE NT

A visit in December by the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture and their Ambassador gave Cotton Australia the opportunity to brief the room on the developments of the northern industry and table interests in discussions on trade, agricultural cooperations, and regional food and fibre security pathways. This engagement strengthened bilateral relationships and highlighted opportunities for joint investment, research collaboration, and market diversification, particularly in livestock and value-added processing. Lead-in meetings included one with the CEO in May and a regional farm visit in September.

VALLEY REPORTS

SOUTHERN VALLEYS, NEW SOUTH WALES

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Myles Byrnes

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

52,000ha irrigated

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

510,000 bales (est)



Cotton Australia hosting NSW Shadow Spokesperson for Water and Member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + Despite a difficult start to the season and limited water availability the yields for the region are looking good.
- + Myles Byrnes took over from Tom Mannes as regional manager, returning to the cotton industry after 10 years.
- + Representatives from Better Cotton visited Australian cotton regions in January to audit the auditors of Cotton Australia's



Picker training, Leeton, Stott's farm

myBMP program. The audit began in Jerilderie, followed by a visit to Cotton Australia Chair Liz Stott's farm in Leeton.

- + Cotton picker essentials workshop was delivered in Whitton.
- + Cotton Australia hosted NSW Shadow Spokesperson for Water and Member for Cootamundra, Steph Cooke as she explored key irrigation issues in the Murrumbidgee Valley in May.



CSD Variety trial field walk at Merrowie

MACQUARIE VALLEY, NEW SOUTH WALES

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Mel Swift

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

28,750ha irrigated

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

349,000 bales (est)



Cotton Australia Board visit, Macquarie Valley

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + The Macquarie Cotton Growers Association (CGA), together with local community members, has released more than 75,000 native fish across four locations in Narromine, Gin Gin, Warren and Gunningbar Creek as part of their annual fish release.
- + Hosted the Cotton Australia Board when they visited the Macquarie to discuss key industry issues with growers. During the visit the board also visited Narromine Irrigation Scheme and Gin Gin Weir.
- + Hosted NSW Shadow Minister for Water, Steph Cooke and her advisor on a tour of the Macquarie Valley to hear more about the cotton industry and its positive contribution to the region.
- + The CGA hosted their annual Golf Day at Warren Golf Club which raised funds to support local charities and clubs.

- + Assisted with promotion of spray drift prevention awareness with Craig Day Spray Optimisation Days and advisor sessions held in Narromine.
- + Macquarie Valley CGA held their AGM in September 2025 in conjunction with Macquarie River Food and Fibre committee, Kerrie O'Keefe was both the MC and Keynote speaker, providing a very entertaining AGM

"Good growing conditions has set the valley up for some excellent results with growers experiencing straightforward picking without any weather delays. Planting for next season will be dramatically reduced due to anticipated zero or very low allocations due to ongoing dry conditions with little to no flow events into Burrendong Dam"

Mel Swift, Regional Manager

NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Richard Gray

GWYDIR, NEW SOUTH WALES

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

74,000ha in total
(45,000 irrigated and 29,000 Dryland)

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

700,000 bales (TBC)

LOWER NAMOI, NEW SOUTH WALES

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

55,200ha in total
(33,700 irrigated and 21,500 dryland)

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

516,500 bales (TBC)

UPPER NAMOI, NEW SOUTH WALES

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

31,950ha
(15,700 irrigated and 16,250 dryland)

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

285,700 bales (TBC)

WALGETT, NEW SOUTH WALES

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

16,500ha in total
(13,400 irrigated and 3,100 dryland)

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

173,000 bales (est)

BOURKE, NEW SOUTH WALES

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

9,750ha irrigated

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

105,000 bales (est)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + myBMP for this period was engagement and information was provided to 66 farm businesses, including 26 farm visits as part of the short listing process. An online component supported 14 businesses, 14 received assistance with collecting evidence, and 6 audits were completed.
- + Promoted AgSkills across the region.
- + Participated in field days hosted by CSD, Bayer and Getta Getta.
- + Attended CSD Field Walks in Narrabri, Wee Waa and Moree.
- + Continued to strengthen relationships with agronomists.
- + Contributed to attend area wide meetings across the Gwydir, Lower Namoi, Upper Namoi and Walgett regions.
- + Represented the region at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.
- + Served as a crop judge for the Namoi and Gwydir areas.
- + Supported industry development through involvement in Camp Cotton.
- + Worked with the Upper and Namoi Valley CGAs to facilitate their annual charity golf days.
- + Worked with schools in Gunnedah and Moree for 'Teach the Teacher' events and facilitated student excursions to gins.
- + Delivered an education day at the University of Sydney, Narrabri campus.

Grower Of The Year Field Day

Supported this year's 'Grower of the Year' Field Day in Spring Ridge on the Liverpool Plains, hosted by the Brownhill family. The event offered valuable insights into an award winning cotton enterprise, featuring a farm tour and discussions on innovation, teamwork, succession planning and long term business resilience, while also fostering industry networking and knowledge sharing.

The event was supported by the Upper Namoi CGA.



Jock Tudgey, Breeza



Richard Gray and Bruce Mennie,
Upper Namoi

VALLEY REPORTS

ST GEORGE, DIRRANBANDI, MUNGINDI, QUEENSLAND

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Angela Stewart

DIRRANBANDI, QUEENSLAND

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

11,900ha irrigated

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

148,750 bales (TBC)

ST GEORGE, QUEENSLAND

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

21,100ha irrigated and 400ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

234,000 bales (TBC)

MUNGINDI, QUEENSLAND

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

17,550ha irrigated and 4,550ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

233,500 bales (TBC)

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + More than 140 people attended the Mungindi CGA Annual Charity Golf Day at the Mungindi Golf Club, raising over \$30,000 for nineteen local community groups.
- + Angela Stewart joined Cotton Australia as Regional Manager for St George, Dirranbandi and Mungindi.
- + Cotton picker essentials training held in St George
- + Federal Assistant Agricultural Minister, Senator Anthony Chisholm, toured a cotton gin and visited cotton growers in St George.
- + Cotton Australia led a high-level electricity delegation to the St George region to discuss affordable electricity and flexibility in tariffs for cotton growers, irrigators and gins the region.



Angela Stewart, Christopher Hardy (Dirranbandi CGA chair), and grower family - Jo, Primrose, and Andrew Slacksmith.



St George energy trip

MACINTYRE VALLEY, QUEENSLAND

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Cate Wild

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

32,000 ha and 4,400ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

425,000 bales (est)



Hamish Clarke, Turkey Lagoon

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + Worked with the local Cotton Growers Association to hold its three annual events. A field day was held at "Shannon" in March and was very well attended, followed by the Golf Day in July and Awards Dinner in August. These local events raise money for the local State High School bursary program. This year, the contribution was increased, with bursaries awarded to two deserving students to support their higher education journey.
- + In education, schools were engaged throughout the year to promote the cotton industry and agriculture more broadly. A careers day was attended at Boggabilla Central School, where students were shown how cotton is ginned using the mini gin, which was very well received. Cotton Australia attended the Moo Baa Munch in Toowoomba, and hosted students from the University of Adelaide on a visit to a cotton farm during an agricultural tour in Goondiwindi. Attendance at Ekka also provided an opportunity to engage with children and families, with the cotton bale proving particularly popular.
- + Assisted with local Farm of the Year judging, with the winner to be announced at this year's Awards Dinner.
- + Continued working with SmartAg Queensland to provide funded training through the Gateway to Training (GTT) program.
- + This training has helped growers working towards myBMP certification achieve their goals. Several new myBMP certifications were achieved this season, along with a number of growers renewing their certification through five-year audits.
- + Hosted the Cotton Australia board on a tour of ThryvOn trials at Brett Corish's "Mundine" property before holding a grower dinner in Goondiwindi.
- + Regional Manager Cate Wild was recognised with the Service to Industry Award at the annual CGA awards night.
- + Hosted fifteen teachers from schools across the Goondiwindi region in the Teach the Teacher event

DARLING DOWNS AND SOUTH BURNETT, QUEENSLAND

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Howard Coggan

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

36,000ha irrigated and 15,000ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

560,000 bales (TBC)



Downlands College farm visit, Wamara

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + 2024 Darling Downs Grower of the Year Field Day held at "Wamara", Cecil Plains, hosted by Tyson and Rosie Armitage, who later went on to win the AgriRisk High Achiever Award at the 2025 Cotton Collective in Toowoomba.
- + The 2025 Darling Downs Grower of the Year Field Day at "Warra Warra", Warra, hosted by Rhys Herbert and Trish Carroll, as well as the 2025 Annual Awards Dinner.
- + Hosted a Cotton Australia Board visit, including a dinner event.
- + Increased the uptake of training provided through SmartAg Queensland in the region.
- + Supported a range of local community engagement and education events, including the University of Queensland Gatton Ag Science Society Beers 'n Careers evening, Accelerating Ag Expo, the University of Queensland School of Agriculture and Food Sustainability tour of a cotton farm, LDC gin and Warrego Water, the University of Queensland Gatton Agribusiness careers evening, Department of Education Pathways & Possibilities evening, Moo Baa Munch, a biosecurity workshop in Murgon, a presentation to a Western Downs Regional Council councillors meeting, a round-table meeting with Asian Commissioners for Trade and Investment Queensland, and Ag Discover Day.
- + Supported farm and gin visits for several schools, including Dalby State High School, Fairholme College, The Glennie School, Downlands College, West Moreton Anglican College and Toowoomba Anglican School.
- + Took representatives from Better Cotton to visit Darling Downs growers including Tyson Armitage at Wamara Farming in Cecil Plains, Johannes and Lauren Roellegen at Brookstead, and John Cameron in Bongeen.
- + Hosted the Cotton Collective event at the Toowoomba showgrounds.

VALLEY REPORTS

CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, QUEENSLAND

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Robyn Lehmann

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

13,000ha irrigated

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

143,000 bales (TBC)



Aaron Kiely and Robyn Lehmann, Emerald

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + myBMP certification was achieved for three new farms, with twelve existing farms (growers) successfully re-certified. Work is continuing with a further four growers to support accreditation in the 2026/27 year.
- + Training was facilitated and arranged through SmartAg QLD funding across a range of areas, including First Aid and CPR, Pilot Escort Training, Electrical Test and Tag, Forklift licensing, Cotton Picker Essentials, MR and HR truck licensing, Chemical Safety, and Telehandler Safety training.
- + Supported and sponsored the Central Highlands Cotton Growers & Irrigators Association and its events, including delivery of a successful Teach the Teacher program for more than 40 educators, the CH irrigated cropping tour, Sunwater irrigation price path reviews, Rural Rates Committee activities, an Emerald Show cotton stand, and the Grower Service to Industry Award at the CHCG&IA Cotton Awards Evening.

- + Continued to maintain strong community engagement by facilitating school-to-farm and cotton gin experiences for students and attending agricultural career events, helping to strengthen links between education and agriculture.
- + Actively promoted Cotton Australia's Cotton Classroom educational resources to ensure schools and educators are aware of the materials available to support learning about the cotton industry.

"The 2025-26 season for Emerald has been mixed, but generally better than many growers initially feared, particularly given ongoing water constraints, variable weather conditions, and rising input costs. The season commenced with a 0% water allocation, resulting in minimal irrigated hectares being planted early. Growers who did plant relied predominantly on carry-over water from the previous season. By October 2025, rainfall across the region enabled additional paddocks to be planted, while water allocation increased to 30%."

Robyn Lehmann, Regional Manager

DAWSON AND CALLIDE VALLEYS, QUEENSLAND

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Renee Surawski

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

10,000 ha

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

96,700 bales(TBC)



Minister Hon. Tony Perrett during flood visit

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + Delivery of Cotton Industry Education through Teach the Teacher at Moura. Hosted 40 teachers from seven schools, improving awareness of modern cotton production, sustainability practices, and career pathways in agriculture.
- + Strengthened grower engagement and industry presence - Increased direct engagement with cotton growers through property visits, regional meetings, and one-on-one support, improving connectivity between growers and industry bodies. Strengthened relationships between growers, industry organisations, government, and service providers, enhancing regional coordination.
- + Delivery of Australian Cotton Strategic Roadmap engagement - Successfully hosted regional consultation with strong grower attendance, contributing to national strategy development across sustainability, traceability, and data utilisation.
- + Facilitation of industry-government connection during flood events - Supported coordination of grower engagement with the Queensland Minister for Primary Industries Tony Perrett during flood recovery discussions, ensuring local issues (crop loss, infrastructure, input costs) were clearly communicated.
- + Disaster response and data capture - Actively supported growers following significant rainfall and flooding events (March 2026), including encouraging completion of Disaster Impact Surveys to inform DPI and QRIDA recovery support options.



Picking at French's farm, Dawson Valley

VALLEY REPORTS

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

REGIONAL MANAGER:

Vacant

Planting in Dec 2025 - March 2026

Picking/Ginning in June/July 2026



David Lemmon and Nicole Scott, Ord Valley



Kununurra Show 2025



Taste of the Kimberley, Cotton Blooms event

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- + The first Teach the Teacher afternoon was held in Kununurra in May 2025 which saw 12 teachers receive hands-on learning about the Australian cotton industry. Discussions and resources offered on how to integrate into the student classroom was a highlight. A great outcome of this event was to see local school excursions visit cotton farms in the valley during the season.
- + A reciprocal exchange visit between Central Highlands CGA and the Northern Cotton Growers saw an action-packed tour to Kununurra and the NT. Sharing of production systems was high on the agenda and for the CH CGA producers understanding the challenges of an emerging industry gave them many opportunities to provide suggestions and solutions to our newly-minted Northern growers.
- + In June, a successful and widely attended Farm to Feed Forum was held in Katherine. Over 100 delegates attended the event with key presenters delivering on many facets of the synergy between cropping, fodder and livestock feeding systems and the value proposition this has for northern enterprises. The NT Coordinator joined Cotton Australia's Northern Manager to deep dive into the newly appointed role and how the long game is to support the diversification and resilience of pastoral systems specifically in the NT. A farm tour was offered the following day visiting a local property to see how cattle and feeding for efficiency has been adopted.
- + Cotton Australia supported the Kununurra and Katherine shows in July. The Rabobank truck attended the Katherine Show, and the Northern Manager was part of a handful of panel discussions over the long weekend. The myBMP Administration Manager supported the events and aside each of the shows on farm visits were made to growers and where myBMP accreditation was covered.
- + Another successful 'Chat with a Farmer' day was held during the Taste of the Kimberley, coinciding with Flanno for a Farmer Day. A high tea style morning was had with over 40 attending to learn about cotton farming systems. Following this event the Northern Manager and local aerial contract sprayer answered questions from the audience at the annual Taste evening celebration.
- + The opening of the Kimberley Cotton Gin was a highlight on the Northern calendar with over 300 people in attendance and a special address from the Minister for Northern Australia, Madeleine King. The facility ginned over 81,000 bales in its first season with the majority of these bales shipped from the local Wyndham Port 100 kilometres away. Much of the cotton feed seed was domestically utilised across pastoral stations in the north and feedlots south of Albany, WA and across into Queensland. Cotton lint bales were also shipped from the Darwin Port demonstrating the capacity for Northern Australia to contribute to global markets.

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

1000ha irrigated and 3000ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

TBC

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Formative growth is happening in Far North Queensland with commitment to industry by several growers to engage and learn as much as possible. Yields for the handful of growers were promising and interest in cotton as part of a rotational system is increasing. Early discussions with

government, through their Prosper 2050 Strategy, has seen further developments and considerations for feasibility studies on a ginning facility proposal in FNQ. This was mentioned in the recent public hearing with the Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

500ha irrigated and 3000ha dryland

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

TBC

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

Planting was reduced given the uptake of consideration of rotational cropping practices and the ongoing challenges of seasonal limitations for dryland production. Soil constraints remain a key focus for further R & D. The Northern RMP planning session, held

in November is a great opportunity for growers and industry to share lessons learnt and what's next and these forums have grown significantly over the last couple of seasons.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HECTARES GROWN IN 2025-26:

8,500ha

BALES PRODUCED IN 2025-26:

TBC

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

A significant jump in area grown under cotton this season saw new challenges and learnings presenting themselves for the valley. Timeliness of planting, and paddock preparation (pre and post season) is a focus to ensure robust RMP methods are prioritised. Ginning processes were lengthy, running into the wet season which presented

logistical challenges for all involved. Recognition must go to all investing in the emerging industry and to the efforts to bring the industry and community together. The formation of a CGA will assist with streamlining many on-farm and area-wide management challenges faced by the growing industry in the seasons to come.

COTTON AUSTRALIA BOARD



ELIZABETH STOTT
Chairperson
Cotton grower – Leeton, NSW



ANGUS O'BRIEN
Deputy Chair
Cotton grower – Warren, NSW



APRIL CAVANAGH
Director, Senior Executive



BERNARD BIERHOFF
Cotton grower – Rowena, NSW



ROB DUGDALE
Industry representative – Lower Namoi
Cotton Growers' Association (NSW)



TONY GEITZ
Industry representative –
CEO of Northern Cotton Pty



DANIEL KAHL
Cotton grower – Wee Waa, NSW



MATT MCVEIGH
Cotton grower – Dalby, QLD



GAVIN DAL BROI
Cotton grower – Southern Valleys, NSW



BRUCE CONNOLLY
Cotton grower – Northern Territory
(Deceased)

COTTON AUSTRALIA TEAM



ADAM KAY
Chief Executive Officer



MICHAEL MURRAY
General Manager



THERESE WOODEN
Finance Manager



ROCHELLE ZAKHER
Executive Assistant



DESLEY SHEEDY
Communications
Manager



SOPHIE DRYSDALE
Communications and
Media Specialist



JENNY HUGHES
Education Manager



PAUL SLOMAN
Policy Officer /
Grower Engagement



JENNIFER BROWN
Policy Officer*



DOUG MCCOLLUM,
Policy Officer - Research
Direction and Stewardship*



ROB CROTHERS
myBMP Manager*



NICOLE SCOTT
myBMP Customer
Service Manager



RENEE SURAWSKI
Regional Manager - Dawson
and Callide Valleys, QLD*



HOWARD COGGAN
Regional Manager -
Darling Downs, QLD*



CATE WILD
Regional Manager -
Macintyre Valley, QLD/NSW*



ANNETTE MCCAFFERY
myBMP Sustainability
Implementation Officer



RICHARD GRAY
Regional Manager -
Northern NSW



MEL SWIFT
Regional Manager -
Macquarie Valley, NSW*



MYLES BYRNES
Regional Manager -
Southern NSW



ANGELA STEWART
Regional Manager - St George,
Dirranbandi & Mungindi QLD/NSW*



ROBYN LEHMANN
Regional Manager -
Central Highlands, QLD*



BROOKE SUMMERS
Supply Chain Consultant*



ASHLEY HOLLIS
Brand Relations Manager



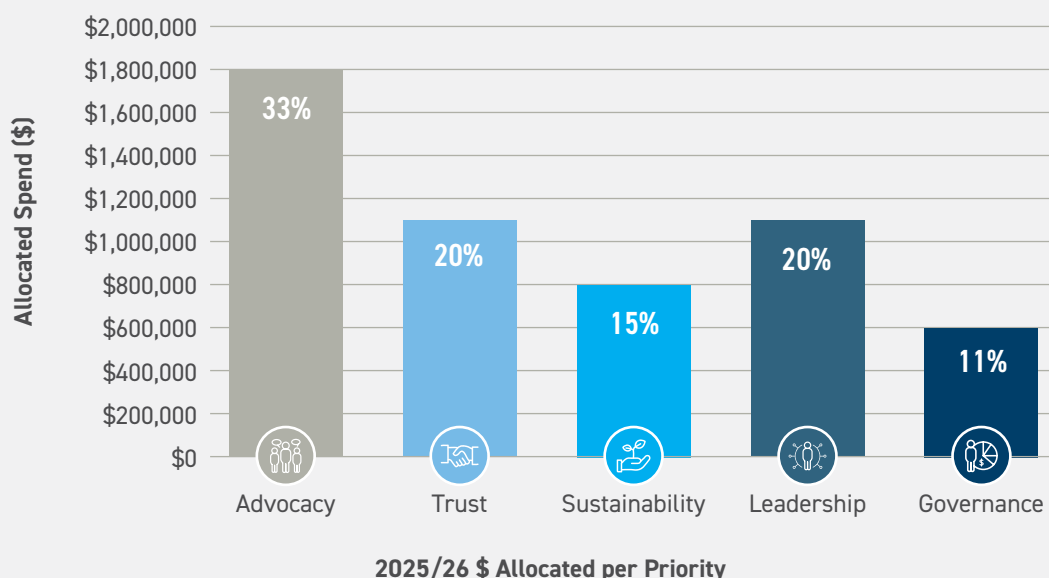
MARY HUTCHISON
Marketing Coordinator*

* Part time

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

INCOME	
YEAR	INCOME
2023/2024	\$6,739,370
2024/2025	\$8,868,310
2025/2026	\$7,797,233
EXPENDITURE	
OPERATING EXPENDITURE	
2023/2024	\$5,529,870
2024/2025	\$7,699,460
2025/2026	\$5,984,601
EQUITY	
2023/2024	\$12,886,165
2024/2025	\$14,055,015
2025/2026	\$15,867,647
LEVY CONTRIBUTION	
2023/2024	68%
2024/2025	70%
2025/2026	77%

2025/2026 BUDGET ALLOCATION BY STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY







COTTON AUSTRALIA

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